

A HISTORY OF THE CHAPEL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH

by

A. C. Howell

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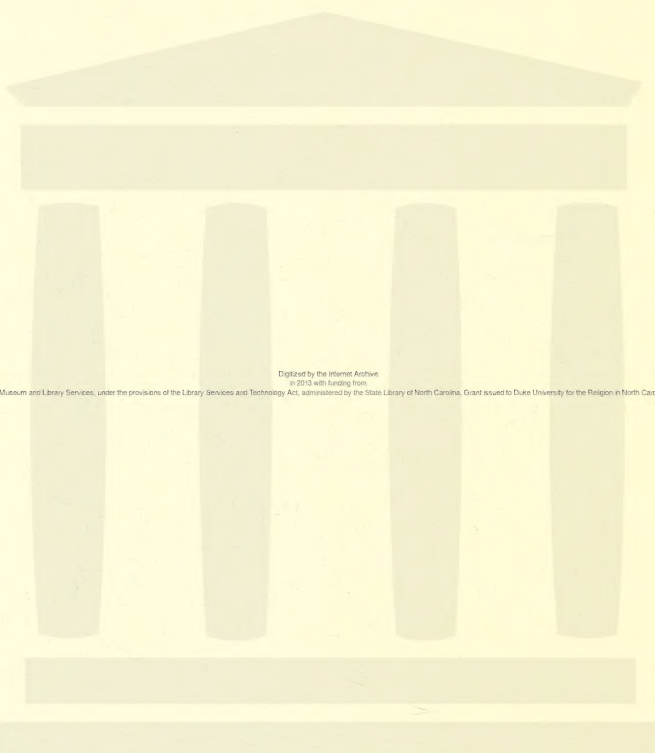
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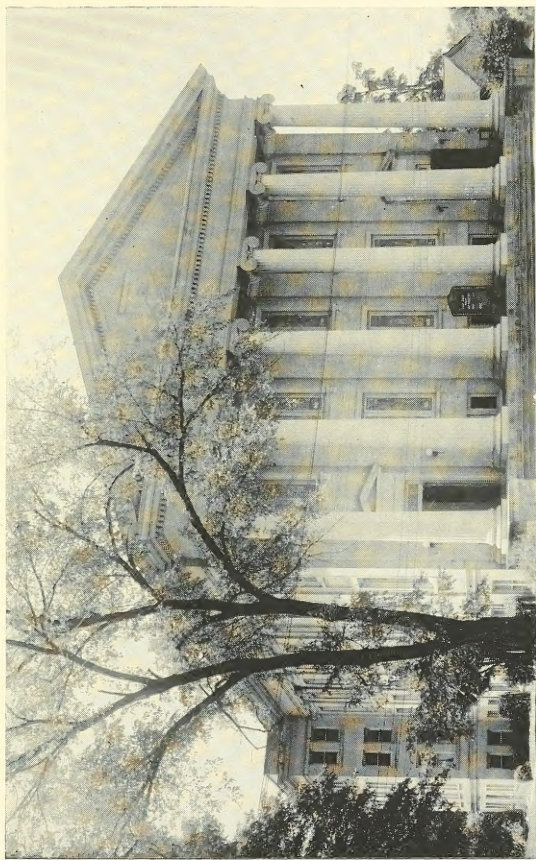
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The Chapel Hill Baptist Church
1854-1924



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The Chapel Hill Baptist Church as it looks today.

A History of
The Chapel Hill Baptist Church
1854-1924

By

A. C. HOWELL

Professor of English, University of North Carolina

Chapel Hill, N. C.
1945

Foreword

This historical sketch of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church covers the period from its organization to the completion and occupation of the present building in 1924. The material it contains comes for the most part from the minute books of the church, with a few additions from printed sources and recollections of people in the community. To the clerks of the church, who kept such careful records of its proceedings, we are deeply indebted. It is fitting that their names should be recorded in this history, and they are listed at the end of the work.

The history of the church from 1924 to the present remains to be written. Perhaps the centennial in 1954 will be an appropriate time at which to bring this account up to date and to publish the history of the first century of the Baptists in Chapel Hill in a substantial volume.

The present sketch was read in an abbreviated form at the dedication service on Sunday morning, July 30, 1944.

A. C. HOWELL.

A History of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church

SOMETIME about the year 1853 a little band of people of the Baptist faith living in the village of Chapel Hill, at that time a tiny place of perhaps three hundred people, began to consider the need for establishing a church of their faith in the town which was the seat of one of the most important universities in the South. Records do not tell with certainty who first conceived the idea, nor who called together the first group, but later evidence indicates that Elder William Henry Merritt was a moving spirit in the affair. Doubtless the itinerant Missionary of the North Carolina State Baptist Convention, Elder J. J. James, was present at some of the meetings, and Elders George W. Purefoy and Brantley J. Hackney.

During the decade after 1840 the village of Chapel Hill had been growing, and various protestant denominations had been organizing churches there. The country churches, which had previously served those who wished to affiliate with groups of their own faith, and the compulsory chapel services, held twice each Sunday in Gerrard Hall, had sufficed for the religious life of the community before the growth of denominational rivalries in the eighteen-forties; but before 1850 two of the present denominations in Chapel Hill had established churches. The Methodists began meetings in an upstairs hall early in the eighteen-forties, and the Episcopal Church was organized in 1842. The Chapel of the Cross was consecrated in 1848, and the first Methodist meeting house, still standing at the corner of Henderson and Rosemary Streets, was dedicated in July, 1853.

Before the village churches were established, chapel attendance was compulsory for all students, and a university preacher was a regular member of the faculty. But during the decade of the forties, the denominations of the state began agitating for a relaxation of this rule, to permit students to attend their own churches on Sunday. In 1849 a petition was presented to

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the Board of Trustees requesting such permission, and on January 4, 1850 the Board passed an ordinance allowing students to attend the church of their choice, which was to be chosen within ten days after their matriculation and not subject to change during a session. Thus, by 1850 the stage was set for the establishment of a Baptist church at Chapel Hill.

Elder William Henry Merritt "was probably the first in conceiving and presenting the idea of planting a Baptist Church at the University of the State," according to the minutes of the church. He was the donor of the site, and in his will he left a substantial sum, \$1200, for the building, actually more than one-third of its cost. Elder Merritt was a power in the community, owner of a famous flour-mill, later called Purefoy's Mill, and of a large plantation. Almost immediately after his death a committee of Baptists in the village met to draw up plans for the new church. It is significant that it seems to have been a community enterprise, for not all were at the time Baptists. They proceeded to employ the Reverend Brantley I. Hackney to solicit further subscriptions for the building fund. The Reverend Mr. Hackney was successful in obtaining numerous pledges, ranging from \$100 each from the Reverend G. W. Purefoy and William Barbee of Chapel Hill down to pledges of \$1.00, \$2.00, and \$3.00 from about two hundred different individuals, many well known to Baptists, from all over this section of the state, including Hillsboro, Pittsboro, Raleigh, Wake Forest, Yanceyville, Smithfield, Fayetteville, Oxford, Richmond, Virginia, and Rockingham County. The minute book of the church preserves the names and addresses of these subscribers, in the clear and beautiful handwriting of the first clerk, P. H. McDade.

While subscriptions were being obtained the committee went ahead with their plans, and on March 6, 1854 contracted for "a neat substantial brick building," 60 by 35 by 20 feet high, with a tower 13 feet square and 45 feet high. The total cost of the structure was \$3,425.00. All of this work took place before any attempts were made at formal organization of a church. Apparently the group had been meeting informally for a considerable time, but on this the church minutes are silent.

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The first formal beginnings of our present church took place on March 11, 1854, when by resolution at a conference of the Baptist Church of Christ at Mount Carmel, a country church several miles south of the village, authorization was granted for the establishment of a branch of that church in the village of Chapel Hill. The branch church held its first formal meeting on April 14, 1854 at the home of W. G. Weaver and there received its first members. Picture for yourselves this little group of devout men and women with high purposes, launching the new church, with reading of the Sacred Scripture, with prayers, and with glad songs of praise. As moderator in the chair sat the pastor of the Mount Carmel Church, the Reverend Mr. Hackney. After the devotionals, he opened the doors of the new church for the reception of members, and the first person to become a member of the infant church was Elder James P. Mason. Throughout the summer the little band continued to meet and receive members by letter. Regular preaching services were held in a room built by Deacon John R. Hutchins. In May, 1855 the church in conference extended a unanimous vote of thanks to him for the use of this room, which he had "so generously built and fitted up for the church," as the minutes indicate. For about twelve months the church was housed in this temporary structure.

The first sermon to the little congregation of which we have any record was delivered by Elder G. W. Purefoy on May 26, 1854, and at the same meeting the first candidates for baptism were received, among them the first clerk, P. H. McDade, whose comprehensive minutes, written in the flowing style of this period, and with an eye for their value to future historians, have furnished substantially all the facts for this sketch. These first members were baptized near Mount Carmel meeting house on June 11, 1854 "to become members of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church when constituted."

During the summer of 1854 the minute book speaks of various activities as being inaugurated. The male members held "social prayer meetings," which were occasions of great profit to the members. Preaching services were held from time to time, and by a resolution of July 14, monthly conferences were to meet regularly thereafter. The conference also voted to

procure "ministers to preach regularly" during the remainder of the year. Though the minutes do not specifically so state, it is apparent that Elder James P. Mason was appointed to preach during the remainder of 1854.

On August 11, the church resolved to ask for permission to have the Chapel Hill branch of the Mount Carmel Church constituted a separate church, and the very next day the mother church gave this consent. September 15, 1854, just ninety years ago was the date set for the organization of the new church. Elder Joshua J. James conducted the ceremony and, with Elders Purefoy and James Wilson, constituted the Presbytery. Elder James delivered the charge. He seems to have been the Paul for this section, for he also helped to establish a Baptist church in Greensboro, and later he became the editor of the *Biblical Recorder*. Elder Purefoy examined the prospective church members "as to their faith and doctrine," and Elder James "with much earnestness urged certain duties upon the members," as the old minute book says; after a solemn prayer by Elder Wilson, Elder James concluded the ceremony by delivering the charge. Afterwards the names of the original members were inscribed in the record book, where they may still be read. The original church roll consisted of thirty-eight names, fourteen white males, fourteen white females, five colored males, and five colored females. There were three candidates for baptism. At this same meeting a petition for admission to the Sandy Creek Association was adopted, and delegates appointed. At the meeting of the Association for that year the new church was cordially received.

In those days of careful formality, it was natural that the church should be properly organized; and on November 7, 1854 a set of rules of order for conferences was adopted. So far as I know, they are still in force, though more honored in the breach than in the observance. Among the more interesting were those requiring monthly meetings of the church in conference, and a roll-call of all white male members at each meeting. After two consecutive absences a member was required to "appear and answer for his delinquency." Another rule required "speakers to observe courtesies, con-

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fine themselves to the subject, and not to speak more than twice on the same subject."

Nor were the women of the church idle. Their first activity was to raise money. During the summer of 1854 they subscribed a fund of \$30.00 to make Elder Hackney a life member of the State Baptist Convention. In the fall they organized a "Sewing Society," which met each week and provided the carpets and curtains for the church then building. Attendance was required, but in lieu of attendance a member might pay a fine of six and one-fourth cents per week. Early this "little band of true-hearted women," as the minute-book calls them, established a principle still observed in our church: they agreed to have no fairs to raise money. Among their first projects was soliciting subscriptions for the purchase of a bell. Then, as now, they were successful in what they set out to do, and by the spring of 1855 had collected \$140.00 of the total cost of the bell, \$210.10; the rest was raised by Esquire William Mogan, a local merchant, from the wholesale firms with whom he dealt. His subscription list mentions firms in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Petersburg, and Chatham, Virginia. The bell was put up February 15, 1855 and, to quote the minute book "spoke its first notes to the village. Long may it remain there, and often may its voice be heard in calling the people to come and worship the Lord God." The bell is still heard on evenings when the Masonic Order meets, but the pious wish of Deacon McDade was not fulfilled, for our present church is without the old bell.

The first duly elected pastor of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church was the Reverend Brantley James Hackney. At a meeting held December 30, 1854 he was elected to preach four times per month at a salary of \$200.00 per year.

During the spring of 1855 the little church was busy making ready for the occupancy and dedication of the new building, then nearing completion. Speakers and guests were invited in February for the service in May, and other preparations were on foot.

In those days church membership was more of a duty and obligation

than today, and the church kept strict watch on its members. "The Christian Walk," as it was called, was straight and narrow, and many fell by the way. Public trials of erring members were held in conference and those found guilty by vote of the church were excluded. Before the church was a year old, the first of these trials was held. In February, 1855 a member accused by "common rumor" of adultery was furnished with the charges in writing and asked to appear before the conference for trial. Although he did not appear at the ensuing meeting of February 28, he admitted the charges to a committee and "said he had done verry (sic) wrong." By a vote of the church he was excluded.

At this point it may be well to say a few words further about the church discipline, which has changed greatly since 1855. Before that year was out a second member, a colored man this time, had confessed in open conference to adultery, and shown repentance, but "for the purity and honor of the cause and church," to quote the minutes, he was excluded. Later he was restored. Before the turn of the century hardly a year went by without an exclusion. The chief causes were profane language, drunkenness, fornication, living in adultery, or other violations of the moral code, and failing to attend church. Among the more unusual charges were these: "disorderly communication to the church and connection with Methodists," "uniting with a Pedo (sic) Baptist Church," "connecting himself with a different faith and order," and for "having renounced the doctrines of our denomination." This last exclusion, which took place on March 31, 1915, is the last recorded in the minute books of the church. In 1859 the conference was the scene of an attempted reconciliation between two members who had quarrelled over a debt. But it failed, and one was excluded. Twenty-five years later he was restored. In 1880 one member was excluded for "distilling," though he pleaded the excuse that he needed the money, and another for "selling ardent spirits."

But perhaps the most interesting case of this sort was that of Brother I. E. Dugger, who asked dismissal from the fellowship of the church in a letter, which is duly recorded in the minutes. In part he wrote that he

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"honestly believed" himself to be "destitute of religion," and "as an honest man and obeying the dictates of his conscience" he felt that he "should sever his connection with the church." His unique request was granted, and a committee was appointed to wait on him and assure him of the good wishes and prayers of the church. Apparently in the eighteen-fifties exclusion from the church was a serious matter, for later Mr. Dugger asked for and received from the church a statement that he was dismissed at his own request and not on account of any charges against his character.

But the church was ever ready to forgive its wayward members; and many, after a suitable interval, were restored to full fellowship. By 1900 the rate of exclusion had so decreased that it was a rare occurrence, and scarcely a dozen have been excluded since 1904, when nine were dropped, largely for non-attendance.

March of 1855 saw the beginning of another activity of the church, the Sunday School. Deacon P. H. McDade was the first superintendent, and its work then as now consisted largely in training the children of the church in the Christian walk. It had a good "corpse" (sic) of teachers and a library which in a few years had grown to three hundred volumes. Catechizing seems to have been one activity, but the principal one was memorizing Bible verses. Statistics carefully kept by the clerk show that in the year 1861 children of the Sunday School committed to memory 20,000 verses of scripture; one nine-year-old girl was the champion with 4,900 to her credit. The Sunday School also subscribed to the Sunday School papers of the day, "The Child's Paper," "The Penny Gazette," "The Young Reaper," and "The Children's Friend." The character of the Sunday School changed slowly through the years, but it is almost half a century before there is much evidence in the records that it developed work for university students and adults.

But to come back to the history of the church. By the first of May the new church house was ready for occupancy. On Saturday, May 4, the first service was held, and on May 5, 1855, the church was formally dedicated. That was a gala occasion. The committee in charge of the arrangements

had invited a number of prominent out-of-town guests to be present, and the minutes note that "the house was densely crowded." The dedicatory sermon was preached by Elder James, who thus witnessed the fulfilment of his work. In the afternoon Elder McDowell preached, and "at candle light" Elder James preached again and "administered the Lord's Supper." Thus securely launched, and with a full program of activities, the Chapel Hill Baptist Church was ready to proceed on its long career of service to the community.

The question of baptizing the new converts soon required attention, and in June an outdoor baptistry was built on the McDade place, by a spring a few yards west of the old church building near the present Elementary School playground. By June 17 it was ready, and that day when the church baptized its first converts was another gala occasion. The preacher was the Elder J. R. Graves, of Wake Forest, and the candidates for baptism were five "servants" belonging to William Barbee. Thus it happened that the first persons to be immersed in the village of Chapel Hill into the membership of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church were Negroes. In recording the immersion in the minutes the clerk develops an interesting argument for its having been practiced in old Jerusalem, where, as in Chapel Hill, no river was available. During the course of the day Elder Graves spoke three times and made such a fine impression upon the church that he received the magnificent sum of \$25.00 for his services, one-eighth of the amount the pastor received for his annual salary.

On July 6 the first white person was baptized, a Mistress Daniel, who was received from the "Episcopal Methodist" church.

In September a service was held for the ordination of deacons, and during that month the first revival service was conducted by a Dr. Teasdale of Washington, D. C. It was a great success, with forty members added to the church, and about seventy-five professing the faith, some joining other churches. Incidentally Dr. Teasdale was collecting funds for building the Fourth Baptist Church in Washington on Thirteenth near H Street and raised about \$450 in Chapel Hill. It is interesting to note in passing that

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the bell of this church was also given by two North Carolina men and that it served Washington as a fire alarm for ten years.

During the years which immediately followed the church continued to grow and prosper, not without problems and troubles. In February, 1857, the second pastor, Elder Levi Thorne, began preaching eight times per month at a salary of \$800. At the same time a superintendent of the building was engaged at \$30 per year to look after the property and engage a janitor.

In August of 1857 mention is made of a "Singing Clerk," Brother Nash Cheek, who thus seems to have been the first musical director. He had two assistant singing clerks, and hymn-singing seems to have been an important activity of the church. From a minute of July, 1861 we learn that the church also had for some time had the use of a "melodion" belonging to Sister Hargrave, to help with the music.

The earliest record of benevolences is a pledge made by the church in 1857 at the meeting of the Sandy Creek Association to pay one twentieth of an annual scholarship for a student at Wake Forest College. It was some time, however, before any systematic giving to benevolences was practiced. But from this small beginning the idea of giving began to grow. In 1863 a collection of \$54.00 was taken up to send the *Biblical Recorder* to soldiers. At the collection for "Army Colportage" as it was called, in 1864, the colored members alone subscribed \$30.00.

By 1863 the custom which we still observe of taking up an offering for the poor after each communion seems to have been established. The collection was over fifty dollars, and in addition, then as sometimes still happens, a gentleman who was not a church member gave fifty dollars. On April 1, 1865 a collection of provisions was made for the sick and wounded soldiers then in Raleigh hospitals, and thus it is evident that the habit of benevolent giving was early a regular part of our Chapel Hill Baptist traditions.

The first reference to giving to missions, however, does not occur until 1868, when a gift of \$8.00 was sent to the Board at Richmond. The very next year (1869) the idea of "systematic benevolence" was adopted after

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talks by the pastor and Professor Watters, who, by the way, is the first professor to be so referred to in the minutes. After that date gifts to various causes are recorded frequently.

But to go back to the history. The second pastor, Elder Thorne, seems to have had a very human failing: he wanted his salary paid in full; and when it was not forthcoming, he resigned—in December of 1857. His salary was a great deal higher than the church had paid before; in 1856 Elder Hackney had had to be content with \$300 for half-time preaching. Thorne's salary of \$800, was to have been raised by subscription. Some of the subscribers, however, had paid only small amounts, or nothing. He was induced to stay on until the new year, when another determined effort was made to secure funds for his salary. At a meeting of January 3, 1858 resolutions were adopted assessing each member an amount to be determined by a special committee "according to their circumstances and ability." The minute book shows the membership list and assessments. "Married sisters, colored members and brethren who are students in the University" were not assessed. Forty-one people were assessed amounts ranging from \$100 to \$1.00, and about \$650 was raised. By this time the membership had grown to 154, and the church appeared prosperous. Thorne, therefore, withdrew his resignation. It appears from the records, however, that Elder Thorne "quit preaching in the midst of the year," to quote the minute book; and though the provocation is not stated, it is evident that his salary was in arrears. Eight of the people assessed had failed to pay anything, and others only a small part. The church, however, continued to experiment with assessments for several years; and only about ten years ago the matter was again presented to a conference but was voted down.

After Thorne's resignation, the church called Elder George W. Purefoy to preach whenever he was able on a Sunday to Sunday basis. He seems to have been too ill to serve often, and various men held the pulpit in 1860, including Elder Thorne. The beginning of the year 1860 marked the greatest membership of the church for over sixty years. The clerk's report

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shows 201 on the church roll, with an active Sunday School and regular preaching services twice each Sunday.

But the shadow of the war to come was already visible. Money troubles were evident, among which was a church debt. The clerk's fervent wish, "Oh how it would glad my heart if we could say our church does not owe a dollar," was not to be fulfilled for several years. Various methods were used to meet church expenses. The salary was lowered to \$600, and the treasurer was forgiven his assessment for his work of collecting the funds. The clerk was asked to write absent members and ask them why they had failed to attend; and as the minute book indicates "No letter of dismissal is to be granted to any member owing church dues, provided the member is well able to pay the same." Moreover the coming of war in 1861 brought inflation, and at the same time a decided lowering in attendance, so that at one time scarcely twenty male members attended the church.

It was not an altogether auspicious moment in the history of the church when Elder N. W. Wilson of Halifax, Virginia, began his ministry in 1861. But he was a wise and courageous man, whose six-year ministry was profitable in spite of the upheavals of war. Statistics for the year 1861 show that he preached one hundred and eighty-eight times, gave eleven expositions of scripture for the benefit of the servants, was present at thirty-five Sunday School exercises, conducted thirty-two prayer meetings, and fourteen singing school periods, presided at sixteen conferences and made one hundred fifty-four pastoral visits. Next year he held a big revival.

One or two miscellaneous events of about this period deserve a place in this record of the activities of the church. July 4, 1858 was a day of national prayer, observed by a special service in the church. In that same year, the Sandy Creek Association observed its hundredth anniversary, with a large meeting at which our church was well represented. In 1860 the church appointed a visiting committee to visit families, converse with them about religion and pray with them, while another resolution urged the student members to attend church with more regularity.

During the decade of the fifties, the Presbyterians had organized a

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church in Chapel Hill and were looking for a place of worship. In 1860 the minute book records that they requested the use of the Baptist church for preaching on any Sunday morning when no Baptist preacher was available. It was, however, "under all the circumstances respectfully declined."

But this lack of cooperation was not always the rule, for on April 26, 1861, a large meeting was held in the church "on account of the Orange Light Infantry going to leave Chapel Hill the next morning." All of the Chapel Hill pastors took part: the Reverend Mr. Wilson for the Baptists, the Reverend Mr. Cunnigim for the Methodists, the Reverend Mr. Shearer for the Presbyterians, and the Reverend Mr. Hubbard for the Episcopalians. Similar services were held in September when another company left. In May, 1862 the church held a day of prayer for the Confederacy at the order of President Davis, and held weekly prayer meetings for the same purpose for some time afterwards. On September 18, 1862 the church held a thanksgiving service for the recent victory over the Union armies, which was followed in the autumn by a stirring revival after which twenty-six persons were baptized. The rôle of the church in war-time is well illustrated by the minute book for these years 1861-65.

On May 15, 1864 the church made its first request for assistance on the pastor's salary from a Mission Board, the "Domestic and Indian Board"; and although the money was appropriated, it was respectfully declined by the Reverend Mr. Wilson. Inflation, however, and the debased currency then circulating had so upset the price structure that the pastor's salary for 1864, of \$1750, was entirely insufficient for his needs; whereas five years before \$600 was the standard salary, and soon after the church was to pay even less. Finally the war ran its course, leaving terrible scars on the church. The minute book tersely states that on May 6, 1865, "In consequence of the presence of a portion of the Federal Army no church conference was held for the month."

In August the Reverend Mr. Wilson resigned but continued to preach occasionally, and church services were held irregularly. In 1866, he was called to preach half-time, to be paid partly with a grant from the Mission

Board, of \$400. In 1867 the request to the Board for funds was not granted, "for lack of funds," and so on July 28, 1867, Elder Wilson preached his last sermon in the village to a crowded house. He had served earnestly and unselfishly for six and one-half years, the longest pastorate until that of Reverend E. I. Olive, who served nine years.

And with his going the church had ended an era. It was but twelve years old, but it had grown from thirty-eight to over two hundred members, then declined to about one hundred. It had seen prosperity and poverty, and it was about to be overwhelmed by the depression of reconstruction days. From July, 1867 to January, 1869, the church doors were to all practical purposes, closed. The Reverend I. A. Emerson was called in 1868, but declined. Various local people held services, and conferences went on, but the church life was at a low ebb.

One reason for the decline in membership was the decision of the Negro members to organize their own church. Relations between the two races seem to have been most cordial before the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. But soon afterwards these relations began slowly to deteriorate. The minute book of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church is an eloquent record of this subtle change. It will be recalled that the first members to be baptized were colored and that colored brethren and sisters made up about one-third of the membership.

Apparently they had separate conferences and occasionally were favored with special sermons. A separate record book of their conferences was also kept but it is no longer available. They contributed when they had the means, and continued to do so for many years, as a list of the eighteen-eighties bearing names of colored contributors shows. But they were always "servants," as the King James version called slaves, and they were always under the control of their white masters. A minute of 1856 notes that a Negro woman was received as a candidate for baptism "by her master's permission," and a note of 1858 approved a plan for better instructing the colored brethren of the church and their children. A committee was appointed to manage the plan and offer "catechetical" instruction on Sunday

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afternoons. But the war put a stop to all this. On September 3, 1865 the church by a unanimous vote agreed "that the colored portion of this church be allowed to withdraw from this church and organize a church to themselves." A committee was appointed to explain the motion to them. On November 4 the clerk was ordered to "grant letters of dismission to the colored portion of this church," although the colored brethren were still allowed the use of the church building, for a small consideration. But in 1871 a lengthy resolution was passed forbidding the use of the building. Thus the color line between the erstwhile Baptist brethren was firmly drawn. But the end was not yet. In 1875 the colored Baptist church requested permission to unite once more with the white church, but the church voted to decline the request and appointed a deacon to "inform the said brethren in as delicate a manner as possible" of the action. A few names of colored members still remained on the books, however. One was granted a letter of dismissal in 1878, and in December of that year the church took the final step by passing a resolution "That no colored persons will be admitted to the Chapel Hill Baptist Church." Colored people continued to attend, however, and to occupy a small gallery, but even that was torn out after considerable agitation, in 1898. So by 1900 the church no longer even afforded a place for colored people to sit and hear the service.

The period from 1870 to 1895 marks the gradual reconstruction and consolidation of the church, as of the university. As the years went by, university faculty members and students were to play more important parts in its life, and it was to be of great influence upon the youth. The beginnings of reconstruction were humble enough. First the church cleared off its debts—not very honorably, however. The Mason family had loaned the church about 1856 a sum amounting to over \$1000. By 1858 it had been reduced to about \$650, but apparently no interest was paid on it. By 1869 it had been reduced to \$110, which the Reverend J. P. Mason was willing to compound. The church paid him \$30, and he gave the treasurer a "paid in full" receipt. Beginning in that year the church also felt strong enough to support a preacher for one service a month, at the magnificent sum of

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\$150 per year, with \$42 for travelling expenses from his home in Hillsboro. They called the Reverend W. R. Gaultney or Gwaltney. His name is spelled variously in the minute book.

At the same time the Chapel Hill church, being east of the Haw River, became a charter member of the Mount Zion Association, established in 1869.

By 1870 the Reverend Mr. Gaultney was preaching half time in Chapel Hill, but he still resided in Hillsboro. He seems to have been concerned with the social as well as the spiritual life of the church; for along with references to missions, we find, in 1870, the query: "What is the sense of this church in regard to any of its members dancing?", and the report of the committee appointed to investigate: "that dancing by members could not be tolerated." No one seems, however, to have been turned out of the church for this activity.

In 1870 the ministers and deacons of the Mount Zion Association held in the Chapel Hill Church what was probably its first formal meeting. Then, as now, they discussed Sunday Schools and missions, a topic becoming increasingly important as the great missionary movement of the latter part of the nineteenth century got under way.

In the same year the minute book records one of the hardships of the time. It was impossible, so the deacons reported, to hold communion service because of their inability to get "pure grape wine."

Gaultney resigned in October, 1871 and the church was without a pastor until November, 1872 when the Reverend W. J. Farrow accepted a half-time call at a salary of \$400. He stayed until February, 1875 and was replaced by the Reverend S. W. Wescott, still on a half-time basis. The Reverend Mr. Wescott served less than three months and died in office, the only pastor to have done so in the history of the church.

Thus for the second time in six months the church was without a pastor. In October, 1875 Elder A. F. Redd, later a professor, united with the church and began to preach without remuneration. His services were so acceptable to the church that a resolution of February 26, 1876 recommended his

ordination and called him to become half-time pastor at \$300 per year. He declined both suggestions, but he continued to preach occasionally.

It was, perhaps providential that he did not accept, for almost immediately the church secured the services of one of her most distinguished preachers, whose ministry made our church famous and influential throughout the state.

The Reverend Amzi Clarence Dixon, brother of the novelist Thomas Dixon, author of *The Leopard's Spots* and other books, was himself to become a famous evangelist and preacher known all over the world. Later he was to hold in turn important pastorates in Baltimore, Brooklyn, Boston, the great church founded by Dwight L. Moody in Chicago, and crowning his career, the widely known Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, founded by C. L. Spurgeon. Young Dixon, just out of college and the seminary, was a flaming light in the village community, an earnest and eloquent preacher. He began his ministry with a revival, and he never ceased to win souls during his brief ministry. He came in June, 1876 and served until January, 1880. The effect of his preaching and evangelistic work was seen at once in the addition of about twenty-five members by baptism, among whom was Isaac Emerson, who became famous as the manufacturer of Bromo-Seltzer, and who was the donor of Emerson Stadium to the university. Another convert of this period was Locke Craig, baptized into the church in 1877, who was later to become governor of the state. At this time the Craigs kept a school in the academy building behind the old church, which was later remodelled into a parsonage.

Of Clarence Dixon's pastorate at Chapel Hill we have, fortunately, a detailed account in his biography, *A. C. Dixon, a Romance of Preaching*, by his second wife, Mrs. Helen C. A. Dixon. He kept a diary of his work, of which he says, in a later period of his life:

While sorting a pile of rubbish [preliminary to leaving for London] I fished out a little dusty, worn diary—it had only cost a dime—which I had kept during my first rural pastorate at Chapel Hill. I read through the entries for every day and my memory carried me back to the little town at the State University of North Carolina.

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Nearly all the entries included a statement like this: "Visited Mr. So-and-so; found him under conviction." "Visited Mrs. So-and-so, prayed with the family; two children accepted Christ."

... Day after day there was a record of souls won to Jesus.

We may also read there his New Year's resolutions for 1877, "To visit more during the year . . . to read my Bible and pray more, to strive to make the prayer-meetings more interesting . . ." From the biography we learn that young Dixon attended lectures in the university and boarded with Professor Redd, who was his guide and counsellor. Although he was but twenty-three at the time, he made a deep and lasting impression on all who came in contact with him; the university officials were so impressed with his influence on the students that in 1878 they invited him to reside in a college dormitory and "become responsible for the conduct of services in the college chapel," Mrs. Dixon says. Thus he was the earliest of our Baptist pastors to become associated with the university in an official capacity. A. C. Dixon was a dashing figure of a man, tall, handsome, with piercing eyes and raven black hair, a very eligible bachelor. It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that the ladies of the church began to take a lively interest in church affairs during this period. We find that in May, 1878 they prevailed upon the conference to pass a resolution removing spittoons from the church and going on to request "that the members of this church desist from using tobacco while in church," and that they dissuade others also. The "spit boxes," as they were formerly called, had been placed in the church in 1856, after a house committee had been appointed to superintend the "cleansing of the floor and providing it with spit boxes." By 1878 social mores were changing. In June the ladies of the Sewing Society presented the church with a handsome communion set.

We may be sure also that they were concerned about church lighting and kept on improving it until the advent of electric lights around the turn of the century. Lighting the church in the early days was a problem and a heavy expense. For the year 1855 the bill for candles was \$34.14, while the pastor's salary was only \$200. In 1860 a Mrs. Cheek presented the

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church with a kerosene lamp, but after the beginning of the war it was no longer possible to obtain kerosene. Candles also, of the better grade were unobtainable, and cost as much as \$40 a box. Finally one of the sisters molded them herself out of tallow, but they were not very satisfactory. In 1862 the difficulty of getting candles made the church try the expedient of "lard in goblets" as a means of lighting, but it was not successful. By 1878, however, the ladies had disposed of the problem of lighting the church, by the use of kerosene lamps.

In the fall of 1878 the church received by letter another distinguished member, Robert T. Bryan, for over half a century a missionary to China, who is still living in retirement in California. Later, for a short time, he was supply pastor of the church. But the climax of A. C. Dixon's ministry came in the spring of 1879 when he held a great revival service, at which many students and townspeople were converted and added to the church. Late in April, 1879, he baptized twenty persons in Morgan's Creek, near the Purefoy Mill, including Charles B. Aycock, who became the great crusader for democratic education during his term as governor, and J. Y. Joyner, who became a noted educational leader and for many years State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Edwin A. Alderman, later president of three universities, was another of those earnest young students later to be renowned leaders, who were led to Christ at the famous revival service which Dixon held in the spring of 1879. Years afterwards Dr. Alderman wrote to Mrs. Dixon, "I remember him well. I often went to hear him preach, and was greatly moved and influenced by his devotion, enthusiasm and eloquence."

In November, 1879 Dixon resigned to become pastor of the Asheville Baptist Church. It is doubtful if he could make ends meet on the pitiful salary of \$600, which prevailed for about twenty-five years in the church. The next pastor was the Reverend Robert Bryan, who preached once a Sunday for \$25 a month. He is, therefore, our oldest living former pastor. At that time the church called another rising Baptist, later to become famous, R. T. Vann. He declined the call, however, and in October, 1880, the Rev-

erend Needham Bryan Cobb, father of our former deacon, Dr. Collier Cobb, became pastor. A minute of 1881 shows that the Reverend Mr. Cobb's salary was \$850, of which the State Mission Board paid \$200.

The Reverend N. B. Cobb was an energetic preacher, who enlivened his church. One of his first acts seems to have been to make provision for systematic giving, by means of the envelope system. At the same time, however, the collection for the poor was abolished. On each Sunday the collection was designated for a special cause, one for missions, one for church expenses, one for ministerial education and Sunday School work, and one for pastor's salary. During this same year, there is recorded the first gift to the orphanage asylum, the sum of \$3.00, collected from the Infant class in the Sunday School. This class, by the way, was housed in the addition built during Dixon's pastorate in 1877. The Reverend Mr. Cobb, perhaps, was also instrumental in having the church send, in December, 1880, a memorial to the State Legislature condemning "the making and selling of spirituous liquors within the bounds of North Carolina."

On December 23, 1880, the pastor's son, Collier Cobb, for half a century identified closely with the life of the church, became a member. A few years before, Dr. A. B. Roberson had been received by letter. He, too, for years was a pillar in the church. In 1882 Professor J. W. Gore was accepted and immediately was made superintendent of the Sunday School, a position he held for about fifteen years. He was always much interested in the work of the young people. In 1886 the church received the Reverend Thomas Hume, D.D., Professor of English in the University and a thorough student of the Bible. He at once interested himself in the missionary and young people's work of the church and for a quarter of a century was a deacon and a frequent preacher. He taught what was probably the first Sunday School class for college students.

In 1888 Fred C. Smith and Mrs. Smith were received. Although Deacon Smith did not spend all the rest of his life in Chapel Hill, he came back to Chapel Hill permanently in 1910 and remained an active worker in the church for a quarter of a century. Always smiling and cordial, he is re-

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membered as our chief usher. Mrs. Smith, who is still in our midst, is probably our oldest surviving member.

The Reverend Mr. Cobb left the church in 1881 and was succeeded by the Reverend M. D. Jeffries. During this period the church seemed to have great difficulty in keeping pastors more than a year or two. In 1885, Jeffries was succeeded by the Reverend E. McNeil Poteat, father of Dr. E. McNeil Poteat now president of Colgate-Rochester Theological Seminary. Next came E. S. Alderman, 1886, George B. Taylor, 1887, and S. M. Hughes, who was ordained in the church in June, 1890.

He was followed in 1891 by the Reverend John C. Hocutt, whose son is still in our midst, and J. L. Carroll, in the same year. In 1895 the Reverend Mr. Carroll's health began to fail. He resigned the pastorate June 19, and died June 26, 1895.

During the eighteen-eighties the church rebuilt the academy building and made it a parsonage, it purchased the first hymnbooks—Gospel Hymns Nos. 1, 2, and 3—and it installed an excellent small reed organ. During these years also are recorded the earliest references to the Woman's Missionary Society, and an organization presided over by Dr. Hume called "The Sunbeam Society," which discussed missionary, orphanage and educational affairs in monthly meetings. It was composed of the young people of the church and was perhaps the ancestor of our present Young People's Society.

The character of the organized life of the church began to change markedly by 1895. In 1884, for the first time in the history of the church we find that the roll call of male members was dispensed with at conferences; and although it was still called with some regularity until the turn of the century, the conference began to assume a less important rôle in church affairs, and attendance fell off. By 1898 it became so usual to dispense with roll call that a resolution abolishing it was proposed. It was narrowly defeated, but the practice soon lapsed, and in 1904, a resolution requiring roll call was passed. Nevertheless, it was so neglected that to my knowledge it has not been called at a church conference since September 15, 1915. Another sign of the changing character of church life was the relative infre-

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quency of church conferences and the very sketchy minutes and reports of committees after 1890. During some of these later years the church held only one or two regular conferences per year, instead of one each month. Perhaps, also, the adoption in 1893 of an elaborate Creed, or Articles of Faith, prepared by the Reverend Mr. Carroll, the pastor, Deacon John Hutchins and Dr. Hume had something to do with this change. It was unanimously adopted, and so far as I know is still in effect. I doubt, however, if many of the present members have read it. One more minute of 1887 has a familiar ring. It is "Resolved that the Board of Deacons divide the list of members among themselves for the purpose of canvassing for pastor's salary."

The years 1895-1896 mark the lowest ebb in the life of the church since the close of the war. The minutes are eloquent for what they do not say about the cause of this decline. They record the fact that the church was without a pastor from June, 1895, until September, 1897, that four men were called but declined to accept, that not more than half a dozen church conferences were held in that period and that Dr. Joshua Gore and Mrs. Gore withdrew their memberships and became members of the Mount Carmel Baptist Church. A number of the other members withdrew at about the same time. Several joined the West Chapel Hill (now Carrboro) Baptist Church. Dr. and Mrs. Gore established and built Gore's Chapel, on a hill-top about two miles south of Chapel Hill, and conducted services there for many years. The building has since burned, but until well into the nineteen-twenties Mrs. Gore and her sister, Mrs. Marriot, continued to hold Sunday School services there each Sunday afternoon. Of the famous Gore-Hume quarrel, which nearly wrecked the church, the minutes say not a word, nor will this history. It is still talked about among old residents who remember the principals.

F. R. Cleveland, the young man who finally accepted the call, must have had a crusading spirit. He was unordained at the time, but he was energetic; and he was able, apparently, to gather up the broken life of the church, though not to do much rebuilding. He was ordained in September,

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1897, and remained until 1900. He left a church alive but not prosperous. From a flourishing membership of close to one hundred seventy-five in the early eighteen-nineties, it had dwindled to one hundred ten by the early nineteen-hundreds. Even the State Board, formerly so generous, had deserted. In 1900 the Board saw fit to withdraw the last \$50 per year it had been appropriating. Fifteen years before it had given \$200, one-fourth of the salary.

The church was largely governed by an Executive Committee, which seems to have attended to both the business and the spiritual affairs of the church. It was usually selected every year, and it consisted mainly of deacons, who held life tenure in that office. No wonder the church was dormant, with its affairs in the hands of a few and its membership seldom consulted.

In 1900 a picturesque figure became pastor, the Reverend Dr. John William Jones, Chaplain-general of the Confederate Veterans, and a fervent believer in the Lost Cause. In the fall of 1901 Dr. Jones was a lecturer before the University Y. M. C. A., of which Charles E. Maddry was Vice-President. Dr. Jones spoke on his intimate personal recollections of the great war leaders, Generals Lee and Jackson, with eloquence and fervor. He seems to have been a popular figure on the campus, for Battle's *History of the University* records numerous references to his appearance on various official programs during his pastorate. Dr. Jones's interest in his beloved leader, General Lee was a frequent topic with him, in sermons as well as lectures, and led him to embody his views in a volume, now quite rare, called *Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, Soldier and Man* (1906). Beside this work, Dr. Jones also wrote numerous others, among which are: *Christ in the Camp—Religion in Lee's Army* (1887); *Confederate View of the Treatment of Prisoners, Based on Official Records* (1876), and *Personal Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Letters of Robert Edward Lee* (1876). Time will not permit repetition here of the choice stories told about Dr. Jones's habit of bringing the Lost Cause even into his prayers, but they are delightful. After his death at the home of his famous son, the Reverend

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M. Ashby Jones, a few years later, the Chapel Hill Church spread on its minutes a sincere and moving tribute to his abiding influence and devoted spirit.

The year 1900 also saw the election of Miss Lena Stone, now Mrs. Williams, as church organist, a position she filled with grace and skill for thirty years. Not many names of organists are preserved in the early church records. They remain a faithful but anonymous band whose services were freely given without thought of reward. We do know, however, that in 1885 Dr. Walter D. Toy, Professor of the Germanic Languages in the university, affiliated with the church and soon became the organist, a position he held for about ten years. Dr. Toy was a member of a distinguished Baptist family; his brother, Dr. Crawford Toy, was for a time a professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and later Professor of Semitic Languages at Harvard University. Another organist of the eightennineties was Charles Roberson, son of Deacon A. B. Roberson, who became later a prominent physician in Greensboro.

At about this time the preacher of the morning, Dr. Charles E. Maddry became identified with the church. His name appears on the Church roll for 1901, and on May 28, 1902, a minute records the appointment of a presbytery to ordain him. The service took place on the evening of June 4, 1902, with the ordained ministers as presbytery to conduct the examination. The minute states that "the examination having proved satisfactory, Brother Maddry was duly ordained." Dr. Jones delivered the charge, Dr. Hume presented the Bible, Reverend Mr. Hocutt led in the ordination prayer and gave the right hand of fellowship. The newly ordained minister was already serving three or four country churches, who desired his ordination so that he could administer the ordinances of the church. Our church has had a generous friend in Dr. Maddry, and it was a proud moment in her history when she ordained him to his career of service. On June 22, 1903, his letter of dismissal was granted; but although his physical membership was elsewhere, he has always remained a member of our church in spirit.

The year 1902 saw the admission to the church of another beloved dea-

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con, Sheriff S. W. Andrews, and by 1903 we find him already engaged in his favorite occupation, representing the church at the Mount Zion Association.

The Reverend Mr. Hight C. Moore, the pastor who in 1903 succeeded Dr. Jones, stayed but a year. In 1904 he was elected State Sunday School Secretary and left to become one of the important figures in our Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Moore was not the first, nor was he the last pastor of our church to step from the pulpit of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church into fields of wider service to the denomination. Two other former pastors, Dr. O. T. Binkley, and Dr. G. P. Albaugh, are professors in Baptist theological seminaries: Dr. Binkley in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, and Dr. Albaugh, in the Divinity School of MacMaster University in Canada. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features in our church history is the number of young men who have gone from our pulpit on to become famous leaders in the denomination.

When the next pastor, the Reverend Mr. C. A. Jenkins, resigned in 1905 after less than a year of service, the church could muster but fifty-one male members, and of that number only ten were present at the church conference which acted on his resignation. The church truly was moribund if not dead.

But a new minister, the Reverend J. W. Wildman, appeared in May, 1905, to put new life into the church. At once he did several things which enlivened the church body politic. First he secured the abolition of the Executive Committee and had instituted our present system of committees. The church also secured a sum of \$300 per year from the State Board to supplement his salary. In 1907 he was instrumental in the appointment of a committee to consider the possibility of a new church building. Thus his was the first recorded step in the long road which led to the completion of the church we are dedicating this morning. Another improvement of his pastorate was the organization of a Baraca Class, taught by Professor A. Vermont of the university faculty, the ancestor of our present Men's Class of the Sunday School. Then it was largely for students.

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The Reverend Mr. Wildman was succeeded in 1910 by a preacher whose name is dear to many of the older members, Dr. W. R. L. Smith. He built up the church rapidly, twenty-three members being added during his first year; and by the time he left, the church roll was up to two hundred members, a gain of almost one hundred in five years. Among the early additions to our church under Dr. Smith was the present president of the American Bankers Association, Mr. Lee M. Wiggins, then a student. Dr. Smith believed in revivals. In 1915 he had a successful one, which according to the minute-book "moved the whole town." Among the twenty-eight who were baptized into our church was our present congressman, the Honorable Carl Durham. During his pastorate our present clerk, Mr. W. O. Sparrow, began his long career of service.

His pastorate also saw the funeral of the last surviving charter member of the church, Deacon David McCauley, who joined the church in 1854 and was continuously a member for fifty-eight years, during thirty-nine of which he was a deacon. A resolution honoring his long and faithful service was adopted by the church on April 21, 1912. And on July 15 another stalwart pillar of the church went to his reward. A resolution of July 31, 1912 memorializes the signal work of the Reverend Thomas Hume, D.D., who had been an active member of the church for twenty-seven years. He had organized the first young people's work and the first students' Sunday School class; he was the author of the church covenant; and he often conducted the prayer meeting or preached. "Dr. Tommy," as he was affectionately known to his hundreds of students, was a deep and careful student of the Bible, and those who sat in his sophomore English classes will never forget his inspiring treatment of the Sacred Story in that course.

Dr. Smith's resignation was regretfully received by his congregation in July, 1916. After an interval in which the Reverend J. G. Pulliam supplied, the church secured the Reverend E. L. Baskin, who is with us this morning. The Reverend Mr. Baskin continued to build and organize the church in an effective way, and particularly to encourage plans for a new building. In 1918 he secured a leave to enter the army and obtain his com-

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mission in the Chaplain's Corps. He returned shortly after the close of the war and remained until December, 1923.

One further step in advance was made on January 2, 1921, when the church secured the services of Mr. Thomas H. Hamilton, Instructor in Voice at the University, as paid director of the choir. So far as the records show, he was the first paid director, and his election began the policy, now fixed in the church, of an adequately supported musical program for the worship service. Originally both organist and choir members volunteered their services, and very little skilled effort went into musical activities. This is not to say, however, that music ever was neglected in the church. Reference has already been made to a "singing clerk" appointed in the fifties. And in 1878 Dr. Dixon had written, in a letter quoted by Mrs. Dixon in her biography of her husband, "Whatever else may be done badly by our church, no complaint can be made against the singing."

Meantime, the seventy-five million campaign among Southern Baptists was getting under way; our quota was \$5000, but the church pledged \$6600. The deacons also requested that funds from the campaign be appropriated for a new church building. Dr. Collier Cobb reported that the State Board was most sympathetic. Nothing was done, however, until 1921, when, at an important meeting, the Board of Deacons received a report that Dr. Charles E. Maddry, Secretary of the State Board had secured approval of the purchase of a site for the proposed new church. In conference the present site was accepted, the church agreeing to pay \$1000 at once and to raise a sum toward the new church. During the next year many meetings were held and several committees were actively at work. Over \$25,000 was subscribed by the local church and about \$100,000 was appropriated by the Home Board and the North Carolina State Board. Among the generous donors were Mrs. W. O. Allen of Windsor and Dr. W. C. Coker of Chapel Hill.

Actual construction of the church we now occupy was started in 1922, and the building was ready in the summer of 1923. The formal opening

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of the church took place on the first Sunday in October, 1923, with the Reverend Mr. Baskin officiating and our own Dr. Maddry as preacher.

In April, 1924, the Reverend Eugene Olive preached his first sermon, a memorable one of hopes for the future, which some of us still remember. His energetic and devoted personality gave a great impetus to the church. One of his first proposals was the plan, at once adopted, of electing deacons for three-year terms and requiring a lapse of one year before one is eligible for re-election. Thus, more of the church membership came to have a personal interest in the affairs of the church. More and more the Board of Deacons began to take the place of the Church Conference, and in recent years it has transacted most of the church business.

The Reverend Olive's welcoming service on April 6, 1924 was a memorable occasion. Dr. Maddry presided, and all the local ministers took part—the Reverend Mr. Lawrence for the Episcopal Church, Dr. Walter Patton for the Methodists, Dr. Moss for the Presbyterians, the Reverend Mr. Howard for the Christians, Mr. Harry Comer for the Y. M. C. A., President Chase for the University and Mr. Hunter, the president of the State Board, for that organization.

Thus we have seen the growth and development of the church from its humble beginnings until the year 1924 when the present building was occupied. At this point the history can appropriately stop. The church building we are dedicating this morning has at last been completely paid for; it has been completely redecorated; and it is ready for many more years of service to the townspeople and students of this university.

The names and dates of the pastors who succeeded the Reverend Mr. Olive and carried on the work he so ably began in this edifice are printed at the end of this sketch. A detailed picture of the events of the last twenty years is in the minds of many of our members. And so this history will not repeat them. Suffice it to say that after many tribulations, both spiritual and financial, the church is in a sound condition, with a membership of over six hundred, with no debts, and with great plans for larger usefulness taking form in the minds and hearts of our beloved pastor and his congregation.

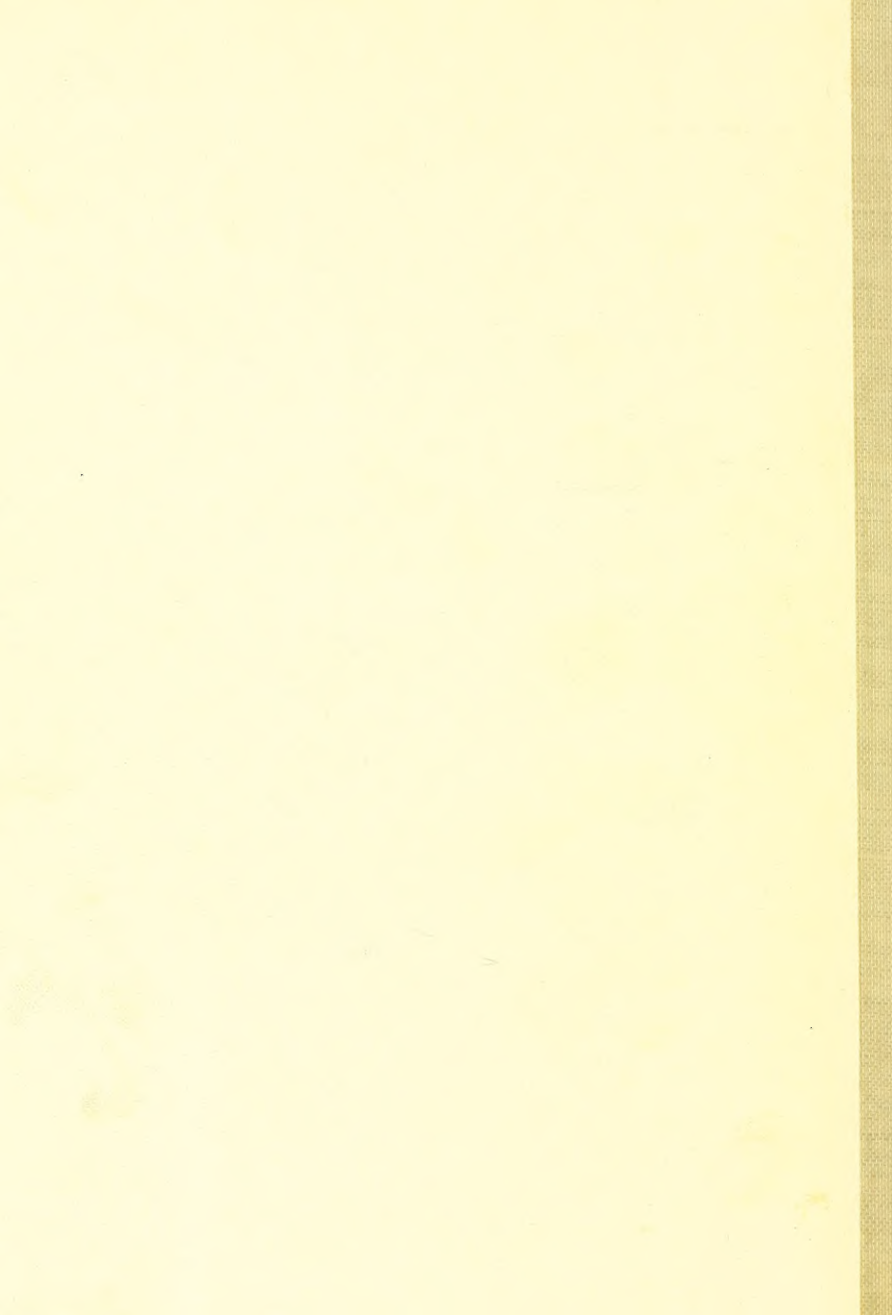
LIST OF PASTORS SERVING THE CHURCH

1854—J. P. Mason	1890—S. M. Hughes
1855—B. J. Hackney	1891—J. L. Carroll
1857—Levi Thorne	1896—Without a Pastor
1859—George W. Purefoy	1897—F. L. Cleveland
1860—N. W. Wilson	1900—J. William Jones
1869—W. R. Gwaltney	1903—H. C. Moore
1872—W. T. Farrow	1904—C. A. Jenkins
1875—S. W. Wescott	1905—J. W. Wildman
1876—A. C. Dixon	1910—W. R. L. Smith
1880—Robert T. Bryan	1916—J. G. Pulliam
1880—N. B. Cobb	1917—E. L. Baskin
1882—M. D. Jeffries	1924—E. I. Olive
1885—E. M. Poteat	1933—O. T. Binkley
1886—E. S. Alderman	1938—J. Frank Poole
1887—G. B. Taylor	1939—Gaylord P. Albaugh
1943—D. Kelley Barnett (<i>Present Pastor</i>)	



LIST OF CHURCH CLERKS

1854—P. H. McDade	1898—Luther J. Weaver
1872—J. R. Hutchins	1899—W. S. Roberson
1874—P. H. McDade	1901—F. C. Smith
1876—A. J. McDade	1906—J. W. Wildman (<i>Acting</i>)
1886—W. S. Roberson	1909—C. B. Griffin
1890—E. S. Merritt	1915—F. P. Tilley
1893—A. J. McDade	1918—W. O. Sparrow



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